

## **Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

### **Listing of Claims:**

1. (canceled)
2. (canceled)
3. (canceled)
4. (canceled)
5. (Original) The method of claim 6 further comprising inserting a parity bit for said error count bit pattern into said transport overhead, where said parity bit is inserted in another portion of said transport overhead where said another portion is unused according to said standard that defines said high-speed frame.
6. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 1 further comprising:~~ A method of generating transport overhead for a high-speed frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network, said high-speed frame of data including a plurality of low-speed frames of data, said method comprising:
  - receiving an indication of error count associated with one of said low-speed frames of data, said indication of error count including a B1 count and a B2 count;
  - determining an error count bit pattern representative of said indication of error count;
  - receiving an indication of synchronization status associated with one of said low-speed frames of data; determining a synchronization status bit pattern representative of said indication of synchronization status; and
  - inserting said error count bit pattern and said synchronization status bit pattern into ~~said a~~ a transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where said error count bit pattern

and said synchronization status bit pattern are is inserted in at least one portion of said transport overhead and where said at least one portion is unused according to said standard that defines said high-speed frame.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 1 further comprising:~~ A method of generating transport overhead for a high-speed frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network, said high-speed frame of data including a plurality of low-speed frames of data, said method comprising:

receiving an indication of error count associated with one of said low-speed frames of data, said indication of error count including a B1 count and a B2 count;

determining an error count bit pattern representative of said indication of error count;

associating a channel identifier with each of said plurality of low-speed frames of data; determining a channel identification bit pattern representative of said channel identifier; and

inserting said error count bit pattern and said channel identification bit pattern into said transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where said error count bit pattern and said channel identification bit pattern are is inserted in at least one portion of said transport overhead and where said at least one portion is unused according to said standard that defines said high-speed frame.

8. (Currently Amended) A device for generating transport overhead for a high-speed frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network, said high-speed frame of data including a plurality of low-speed frames of data, said device comprising:

an error count bit pattern generator for: receiving an indication of error count associated with one of said low-speed frames of data; and determining an error count bit pattern representative of said indication of error count, said indication of error count including a B1 count and a B2 count; ~~and~~

a line overhead inserter, in communication with said error count bit pattern generator, for inserting said error count bit pattern into a transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where said error count bit pattern is inserted in at least one portion of said transport overhead and where said at least one portion is unused according to

a standard that defines said high-speed frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard; and further comprising

at least one of:

a synchronization status bit pattern generator for receiving an indication of synchronization status associated with one of said low-speed frames of data; and determining a synchronization status bit pattern representative of said indication of synchronization status;

or

a channel identification bit pattern generator for associating a channel identifier with each of said plurality of low-speed frames of data; and determining a channel identification bit pattern representative of said channel identifier; and

wherein said line overhead inserter also inserts at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit pattern into said transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where said at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit pattern is inserted in said at least one portion of said transport overhead.

9. (Currently Amended) A device for generating transport overhead for a high-speed frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network, said high-speed frame of data including a plurality of low-speed frames of data, said device comprising:

means for receiving an indication of error count associated with one of said low-speed frames of data, said indication of error count including a B1 count and a B2 count;

means for determining an error count bit pattern representative of said indication of error count;

means for inserting said error count bit pattern into a transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where said error count bit pattern is inserted in at least one portion of said transport overhead and where said at least one portion is unused according to a standard that defines said high-speed frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard; and further comprising

at least one of:

means for receiving an indication of synchronization status associated with one of said low-speed frames of data; and determining a synchronization status bit pattern representative of said indication of synchronization status;

or

means for associating a channel identifier with each of said plurality of low-speed frames of data; and determining a channel identification bit pattern representative of said channel identifier; and

wherein said means for inserting said error count bit pattern into a transport overhead for said high-speed frame further comprises means for inserting at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit pattern into said transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where said at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit pattern is inserted in said at least one portion of said transport overhead.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of processing transport overhead for a frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network in accordance with the SONET standard, said method comprising:

generating an error count including a B1 count and a B2 count by:

receiving a first low-speed frame;

calculating a first error monitoring set of bits based on said first frame;

receiving a second low-speed frame;

extracting a second error monitoring set of bits from a transport overhead of said second frame;

enumerating a number of differences between said first error monitoring set of bits and said second error monitoring set of bits as said error count; and

where a first performance of said generating gives an initial error count, repeating said generating to give at least one subsequent error count;

summing said initial error count and said at least one subsequent error count to give an accumulated error count; ~~and~~

sending an indication of error count, based on said accumulated error count, to a device for generating transport overhead for a high-speed frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network, said high-speed frame of data including a plurality of low-speed

frames of data including said first low-speed frame and said second low-speed frame; and further comprising

at least one of:

receiving an indication of synchronization status associated with one of said low-speed frames of data and determining a synchronization status bit pattern representative of said indication of synchronization status;

or

associating a channel identifier with each of said low-speed frames of data and determining a channel identification bit pattern representative of said channel identifier;

and

wherein said sending an indication of error count further comprises sending at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit pattern to said device for generating transport overhead.

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11. (Currently Amended) A device for processing transport overhead for a frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network in accordance with the SONET standard, said device comprising:

an error monitor for generating an error count including a B1 count and a B2 count by:

receiving a first low-speed frame;

calculating a first error monitoring set of bits based on said first frame;

receiving a second low-speed frame;

extracting a second error monitoring set of bits from a transport overhead of said second frame;

enumerating a number of differences between said first error monitoring set of bits and said second error monitoring set of bits as said error count; and

where a first performance of said generating gives an initial error count, repeating said generating to give at least one subsequent error count;

a count accumulator for:

summing said initial error count and said at least one subsequent error count to give an accumulated error count; and

sending an indication of error count, based on said accumulated error count, to a device for generating transport overhead for a high-speed frame of data in a

synchronous optical communications network, said high-speed frame of data including a plurality of low-speed frames of data including said first low-speed frame and said second low-speed frame; and further comprises at least one of:

a synchronization status bit pattern generator for receiving an indication of synchronization status associated with one of said low-speed frames of data; and determining a synchronization status bit pattern representative of said indication of synchronization status;

or

a channel identification bit pattern generator for associating a channel identifier with each of said low-speed frames of data; and determining a channel identification bit pattern representative of said channel identifier; and wherein said count accumulator further serves to send at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit pattern to said device for generating transport overhead.

12. (Currently Amended) A device for processing transport overhead for a frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network in accordance with the SONET standard, said device comprising:

means for generating an error count including a B1 count and a B2 count by:

receiving a first low-speed frame;

calculating a first error monitoring set of bits based on said first frame;

receiving a second low-speed frame;

extracting a second error monitoring set of bits from a transport overhead of said second frame;

enumerating a number of differences between said first error monitoring set of bits and said second error monitoring set of bits as said error count; and

where a first performance of said generating gives an initial error count, means for repeating said generating to give at least one subsequent error count;

means for summing said initial error count and said at least one subsequent error count to give an accumulated error count; and

means for sending an indication of error count, based on said accumulated error count, to a device for generating transport overhead for a high-speed frame of data in a

synchronous optical communications network, said high-speed frame of data including a plurality of low-speed frames of data including said first low-speed frame and said second low-speed frame; and further comprising  
at least one of:

means for receiving an indication of synchronization status associated with one of said low-speed frames of data; and determining a synchronization status bit pattern representative of said indication of synchronization status;

or

means for associating a channel identifier with each of said low-speed frames of data; and determining a channel identification bit pattern representative of said channel identifier; and

wherein said means for sending an indication of error count further serves to send at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit pattern to said device for generating transport overhead.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of combining a plurality of low-speed frames of data into a high-speed frame of data such that error monitoring counts are transparently transferred to a receiving network element, said method comprising:

receiving a set of low-speed frames on each of a plurality of channels;

generating an accumulated error count using a B1 count and a B2 count for each channel from a received set of said plurality of low-speed frames on said each channel;

determining an error count bit pattern for said each channel based on said accumulated error count for each channel; ~~and~~

inserting said error count bit pattern into a transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where ~~said one~~ said error count bit pattern is inserted in at least one portion of said transport overhead and where said at least one portion is unused according to a standard that defines said high-speed frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard; and further comprising

at least one of:

receiving an indication of synchronization status associated with one of said low-speed frames of data; determining a synchronization status bit pattern representative of said indication of synchronization status;

or

associating a channel identifier with each of said plurality of low-speed frames of data; determining a channel identification bit pattern representative of said channel identifier; and  
wherein said inserting said error count bit pattern further comprises inserting at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit pattern into said transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where said at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit pattern is inserted in said at least one portion of said transport overhead.

14. (Currently Amended) A combiner for combining a plurality of low-speed frames of data into a high-speed frame of data such that error monitoring counts are transparently transferred to a receiving network element, said combiner comprising:

for each of a plurality of channels, a low-speed transport overhead processor for:

receiving a set of low-speed frames; and

generating an accumulated error count using a B1 count and a B2 count from said received set; ~~and~~

a high-speed transport overhead generator, in communication with each said low-speed transport overhead processor for:

determining an error count bit pattern for said each channel based on said accumulated error count for each channel; and

inserting said error count bit pattern into a transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where ~~said one~~ said error count bit pattern is inserted in at least one portion of said transport overhead and where said at least one portion is unused according to a standard that defines said high-speed frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard; and further comprising  
at least one of:

a synchronization status bit pattern generator for: receiving an indication of synchronization status associated with one of said low-speed frames of data; and determining a synchronization status bit pattern representative of said indication of synchronization status;

or



a channel identification bit pattern generator for: associating a channel identifier with each of said plurality of low-speed frames of data; and determining a channel identification bit pattern representative of said channel identifier; and wherein said high-speed transport overhead generator further serves to insert at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit pattern into a transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where said at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit pattern is inserted in said at least one portion of said transport overhead.

15. (Currently Amended) A combiner for combining a plurality of low-speed frames of data into a high-speed frame of data such that error monitoring counts are transparently transferred to a receiving network element, said combiner comprising:

means for receiving a set of low-speed frames on each of a plurality of channels;

means for generating an accumulated error count using a B1 count and a B2 count for each channel from a received set of said plurality of low-speed frames on said each channel;

means for determining an error count bit pattern for said each channel based on said accumulated error count for each channel; and

means for inserting said error count bit pattern into a transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where ~~said one~~ said error count bit pattern is inserted in at least one portion of said transport overhead and where said at least one portion is unused according to a standard that defines said high-speed frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard; and further comprising

at least one of:

means for receiving an indication of synchronization status associated with one of said low-speed frames of data; and determining a synchronization status bit pattern representative of said indication of synchronization status;

or

means for associating a channel identifier with each of said plurality of low-speed frames of data; and determining a channel identification bit pattern representative of said channel identifier; and

wherein said means for inserting said error count bit pattern further serves to insert at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit

pattern into a transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where said at least one of said synchronization status bit pattern or said channel identification bit pattern is inserted in said at least one portion of said transport overhead.

16. (Currently Amended) A method of processing transport overhead for a frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network, said method comprising:

receiving said frame of data;

extracting, from a transport overhead of said frame of data, an error count bit pattern including a B1 count and a B2 count, where said error count bit pattern is extracted from at least one portion of said transport overhead and where said at least one portion is unused according to a standard that defines said frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard;

receiving an indication of a quantity of errors associated with said frame;

determining an error count quantity from said error count bit pattern[[:]], where said determining said error count quantity is further based on said indication of said quantity of errors associated with said frame; and

indicating said error count quantity to an appropriate one of a plurality of transport overhead generators.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16 wherein said at least one portion of said transport overhead comprises at least one Z1 byte.

19. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein said determining comprises dividing a value represented by said error count bit pattern by a pre-determined integer value.

20. (Currently Amended) A device for processing transport overhead for a frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network, said device comprising:

a channel information monitor for:

receiving said frame of data;

extracting, from a transport overhead of said frame of data, an error count bit pattern including a B1 count and a B2 count, where said error count bit pattern is

extracted from at least one portion of said transport overhead and where said at least one portion is unused according to a standard that defines said frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard;

receiving an indication of a quantity of errors associated with said frame;

determining an error count quantity from said error count bit pattern[[:]], where said determining said error count quantity is further based on said indication of said quantity of errors associated with said frame; and

indicating said error count quantity to an appropriate one of a plurality of transport overhead generators.

21. (Currently Amended) A device for processing transport overhead for a frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network, said device comprising:

means for receiving said frame of data;

means for extracting, from a transport overhead of said frame of data, an error count bit pattern including a B1 count and a B2 count, where said error count bit pattern is extracted from at least one portion of said transport overhead and where said at least one portion is unused according to a standard that defines said frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard;

means for receiving an indication of a quantity of errors associated with said frame;

means for determining an error count quantity from said error count bit pattern[[:]], where said determining said error count quantity is further based on said indication of said quantity of errors associated with said frame; and

means for indicating said error count quantity to an appropriate one of a plurality of transport overhead generators.

22. (Currently Amended) A method of generating transport overhead for a low-speed frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network, said low-speed frame of data received as part of a high-speed frame of data, said method comprising:

receiving at least one error count quantity associated with said low-speed frame of data, where said at least one error count quantity is determined from an error count bit pattern including a B1 count and a B2 count extracted from said high-speed frame of data;

determining a standard error monitoring set of bits based on a previous low-speed frame of data;

creating an altered error monitoring set of bits that differs from said standard error monitoring set of bits in a number of bit positions equivalent to said error count quantity; ~~and~~

inserting said altered error monitoring set of bits into a transport overhead for said frame, where said altered error monitoring set of bits is inserted in a location normally occupied by said error monitoring set of bits according to a standard that defines said frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard[.];

receiving an indication of a quantity of errors associated with said high-speed frame; and

where said determining said error count quantity is further based on said indication of said quantity of errors associated with said high-speed frame.

23. (canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) A device for generating transport overhead for a low-speed frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network, said low-speed frame of data received as part of a high-speed frame of data, said device comprising:

a count processor for: receiving an indication of a quantity of errors associated with said high-speed frame; receiving ~~an~~ at least one error count quantity associated with said low-speed frame of data, where said at least one error count quantity is determined from an error count bit pattern including a B1 count and a B2 count ~~of~~ extracted from said high-speed frame of data and further determined based on said indication of said quantity of errors associated with said high-speed frame;

an error count generator, in communication with said count processor, for:

determining a standard error monitoring set of bits based on a previous low-speed frame of data;

receiving said error count quantity from said count processor;

creating an altered error monitoring set of bits that differs from said standard error monitoring set of bits in a number of bit positions equivalent to said error count quantity; and

an overhead inserting device, in communication with said error count generator, for inserting said altered error monitoring set of bits into a transport overhead for said frame, where said altered error monitoring set of bits is inserted in a location normally occupied by said standard error monitoring set of bits according to a standard that defines said frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard.

25. (Currently Amended) A device for generating transport overhead for a low-speed frame of data in a synchronous optical communications network, said low-speed frame of data received as part of a high-speed frame of data, said device comprising:

means for receiving an indication of a quantity of errors associated with said high-speed frame;

means for receiving at least one error count quantity associated with said low-speed frame of data, where said at least one error count quantity is determined from an error count bit pattern including a B1 count and a B2 count extracted from said high-speed frame of data and further determined based on said indication of said quantity of errors associated with said high-speed frame;

means for determining a standard error monitoring set of bits based on a previous low-speed frame of data;

means for creating an altered error monitoring set of bits that differs from said standard error monitoring set of bits in a number of bit positions equivalent to said error count quantity; and

means for inserting said altered error monitoring set of bits into a transport overhead for said frame, where said altered error monitoring set of bits is inserted in a location normally occupied by said error monitoring set of bits according to a standard that defines said frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard.

26. (Currently Amended) A method of de-multiplexing a plurality of low-speed frames of data from a high-speed frame of data, said method comprising:

receiving said high-speed frame;

extracting an error count bit pattern including a B1 count and a B2 count from said high-speed frame;

determining a quantity of errors associated with said high-speed frame;  
determining an error count quantity based on said error count bit pattern, where  
said determining said error count quantity is further based on said quantity of errors  
associated with said high-speed frame;  
determining a standard error monitoring set of bits for a low-speed frame;  
creating an altered error monitoring set of bits that differs from said standard error  
monitoring set of bits in a number of bit positions equivalent to said error count  
quantity; and  
inserting said altered error monitoring set of bits into a transport overhead for said  
low-speed frame, where said altered error monitoring set of bits is inserted in a location  
normally occupied by said standard error monitoring set of bits according to a standard  
that defines said low-speed frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed  
frame is the SONET standard.

27. (canceled)

28. (Currently Amended) A device for de-multiplexing a plurality of low-speed frames of data  
from a high-speed frame of data, said device comprising:

a high-speed transport overhead processor for:  
receiving said high-speed frame;  
extracting an error count bit pattern including a B1 count and a B2 count from said  
high-speed frame;  
determining a quantity of errors associated with said high-speed frame;  
determining an error count quantity based on said error count bit pattern, where  
said determining said error count quantity is further based on said quantity of errors  
associated with said high-speed frame;  
a low-speed transport overhead generator, in communication with said high-speed  
transport overhead processor, for:  
determining a standard error monitoring set of bits for a low-speed frame;  
creating an altered error monitoring set of bits that differs from said standard error  
monitoring set of bits in a number of bit positions equivalent to said error count  
quantity; and

inserting said altered error monitoring set of bits into a transport overhead for said low-speed frame, where said altered error monitoring set of bits is inserted in a location normally occupied by said standard error monitoring set of bits according to a standard that defines said low-speed frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard.

29. (Previously Presented) A device for de-multiplexing a plurality of low-speed frames of data from a high-speed frame of data, said device comprising:

means for receiving said high-speed frame;

means for extracting an error count bit pattern including a B1 count and a B2 count from said high-speed frame;

means for determining a quantity of errors associated with said high-speed frame;

means for determining an error count quantity based on said error count bit pattern,  
where said determining said error count quantity is further based on said quantity of errors associated with said high-speed frame;

means for determining a standard error monitoring set of bits for a low-speed frame;

means for creating an altered error monitoring set of bits that differs from said standard error monitoring set of bits in a number of bit positions equivalent to said error count quantity; and

means for inserting said altered error monitoring set of bits into a transport overhead for said low-speed frame, where said altered error monitoring set of bits is inserted in a location normally occupied by said standard error monitoring set of bits according to a standard that defines said low-speed frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard.

30. (Currently Amended) A communication system for transporting a plurality of channels of low-speed frames of data on a single channel of high-speed frames of data, said system comprising:

a combiner for combining said low-speed frames of data into a high-speed frame of data including:

for each of a plurality of channels, a low-speed transport overhead processor  
for:

receiving a set of low-speed frames; and  
generating an accumulated error count from said received set;  
a high-speed transport overhead generator, in communication with each said low-speed transport overhead processor for:  
determining an error count bit pattern including a B1 count and a B2 count for said each channel based on said accumulated error count for each channel; and  
inserting at least one said error count bit pattern into a transport overhead for said high-speed frame, where said one said error count bit pattern is inserted in at least one portion of said transport overhead and where said at least one portion is unused according to a standard that defines said high-speed frame, wherein said standard that defines said high-speed frame is the SONET standard; and  
a device for de-multiplexing said plurality of low-speed frames of data from said high-speed frame of data including:  
a high-speed transport overhead processor for:  
receiving said high-speed frame;  
extracting said error count bit pattern from said high-speed frame;  
determining a quantity of errors associated with said high-speed frame;  
determining an error count quantity based on said error count bit pattern, where said determining said error count quantity is further based on said quantity of errors associated with said high-speed frame;  
a low-speed transport overhead generator, in communication with said high-speed transport overhead processor, for:  
determining a standard error monitoring set of bits for a low-speed frame;  
creating an altered error monitoring set of bits that differs from said standard error monitoring set of bits in a number of bit positions equivalent to said error count quantity; and  
inserting said altered error monitoring set of bits into a transport overhead for said low-speed frame, where said altered error monitoring set of bits is inserted in a location normally occupied by said standard



error monitoring set of bits according to said standard that defines said low-speed frame.

31. (canceled)

32. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one portion of said transport overhead comprises at least one Z1 byte.

33. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one portion of said transport overhead comprises at least one S1 byte.